

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAB-01 SAM-01 SSM-03 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01

CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-04 /076 W
----- 128842

R 251335Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 398

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRD EAID PFOR BEXP EG XF

SUBJECT: BOYCOTT ON CANAL PASSAGE

REF: STATE 043544 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL APPARENTLY CROSSED WITH CAIRO'S 2405
REPORTING RADIO DAMASCUS CLAIM THAT AL BOYCOTT OFFICE
HAD BLACKLISTED 36 SHIPS WHICH TRANSITTED SUEZ CANAL
CARRYING ISRAELI CARGO AND SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS
PROFESSED UNAWARENESS OF ANY SUCH ACTION.

2. UPON RECEIPT REFTEL, COMLOFF QUERIED AP CORRESPONDENT
FOR DETAILS. IT APPEARS AP HAS STRINGER AT PORT
SAID. LATTER ALLEGEDLY OBTAINED STORY THERE FROM
QUOTE AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE UNQUOTE, WHICH WE SURMISE
MAY HAVE BEEN ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT OFFICE OFFICIAL
IN PORT SAID. ACCORDING SOURCE, TRANSITING SHIPS
ARE BOARDED BY AN EGYPTIAN WORKING FOR AL BOYCOTT
OFFICE TO LOOK AT SHIP'S LOG. (GAMASY HAD EARLIER
TOLD AMB HE HAS GOE MIN WAR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE AT BOTH
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PORT SAID AND SUEZ TO CHECK THAT ISRAELI CARGOES

ARE NON-STRATEGIC. WE ASSUME AL INSPECTION CITED IN AP STORY IS SEPARATE, BUT HAVE NO DIRECT WAY OF CONFIRMING THIS). IN ABSENCE FURTHER INFORMATION, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT, BASED ON AL OFFICIAL'S FINDINGS, AL BOYCOTT OFFICE MAY HAVE BLACKLISTED SHIPS. SINCE WE HAVE NO DIRECT CONTACT WITH BOYCOTT OFFICE, WE ARE UNABLE TO CONFIRM WHETHER IT HAS AUTHORITY TO DO SO ON ITS OWN, PERHPAS IN CONTEXT GENERAL AL GUIDELINES, OR WHETHER SPECIFIC ADVANCE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED FROM DAMASCUS CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICE.

3. WE HAVE NO DIRECT KNOWLEDGE WHETHER AMERICAN SHIP QUOTE YELLOWSTONE UNQUOTE REQUESTED AND WAS REFUSED SERVICE BY EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS AT PORT SAID AS AP STORY STATES. NOR CAN WE BE SURE THAT EITHER MFA OR MIN WAR CLEARLY SEES DISTINCTION BETWEEN ALLOWING TRANSIT AND RENDERING SERVICES. SHOULD SERVICES HAVE BEEN REFUSED, WE WOULD CERTAINLY AGREE THAT THIS IS A VIOLATION OF THE SPIRIT, IF NOT THE LETTER OF THE AGREEMENT. FROM OUR EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH SENIOR EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS ON THIS SUBJECT, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THERE IS A DECIDED RELUCTANCE AT THE MFA TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO CANAL OR PORT SAID OFFICIALS WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO SUGGEST MFA SOFTNESS IN FOLLOWING PRESCRIBED AL BOYCOTT PROCEDURES.

4. AMB AGAIN TALKED TODAY TO MFA CHEF DO CABINET, USAMA AL-BAZ, WHO STILL PROFESSED HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE. AMB GAVE HIM TEXT OF WASHINGTON POST STORY, NOTING GOE OUGHT TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT ADVERSE PUBLICITY OF THIS SORT. AL-BAZ AGAIN PROMISED LOOK INTO MATTER. FEW MINUTES AGO ONE OF AL-BAZ' COLLEAGUES CALLED AMB TO SAY HE HAD CHECKED WITH MIN WAR RE QUOTE YELLOWSTONE UNQUOTE. MIN WAR STATED THAT, DESPITE FACT QUOTE YELLOWSTONE UNQUOTE UNLOADED CARGO AT FAIFA, EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES AT PORT SAID HAD QUOTE RENDERED (UNSPECIFIED) SERVICES UNQUOTE AND THERE HAD BEEN NO DELAY IN PERMITTING CANAL TRANSIT.

5. RECOMMEND:
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(A) DEPT FIRST SEEK TO ASCERTAIN FROM MASTER OF QUOTE YELLOWSTONE UNQUOTE EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED AT PORT SAID AND WHETHER VESSEL WAS REFUSED ANY PORT SERVICES BY EGYPTIAN PORT OFFICIALS. CAN MASTER MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AL OFFICAL (WHO MAY HAVE BEEN EGYPTIAN NATIONAL) AND GOE OFFICIAL?

(B) IF SERVICES WERE REFUSED, THAT WE MAKE AN
APPROACH TO GOE -- AT FAHMY LEVEL -- POINTING OUT
(1) SUCH ACTION BY EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS, IN OUR
VIEW, CONTRAVENES SPIRIT OF THE DISENGAGEMENT
AGREEMENT, AND (2) STRONGLY ADVERSE CONGRESSIONAL AND
PUBLIC REACTION TO SUCH ACTIONS, WHICH IF THEY
CONTINUE, COULD ADVERSELY EFFECT OUR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN
TANGIBLE ECONOMIC AND OTHER SUPPORT THAT GOE NEEDS.

6. AMB INTENDS HAVE NEW US CONSUL FOR PORT SAID,
WHEN THAT POST IS OPENED NEXT WEEK OR SO, DISCREETLY
MONITOR ISRAELI CARGO TRANSIT PROCEDURES AND PREPARE
REPORT ON EXACTLY WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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